

## Victoria McKean

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**From:** Kristina Egyed [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** March-02-25 8:29 AM  
**To:** Barb Desjardins; Ken Armour; Andrea Boardman; Duncan Cavens; Jacob Helliwell; Tim Morrison  
**Cc:** Council  
**Subject:** Urgent Concern: Economic Development Cuts in 2025 Budget  
**Categories:** Agenda Item, Inputted in to Mail Log

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Township of Esquimalt Network. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed 2025 budget, particularly the elimination of funding for the South Island Prosperity Partnership (SIPP) and the overall reduction in economic development initiatives. These cuts will leave Esquimalt with little to no structured support for local businesses and will sever vital connections with regional economic development efforts. At a time when businesses are already facing mounting challenges, this decision risks limiting Esquimalt's ability to attract and retain economic investment.

The proposed 14.09% property tax increase will disproportionately impact businesses compared to residential taxpayers. By cutting funding for SIPP, Esquimalt is removing a key resource that helps businesses navigate economic uncertainty, fosters collaboration across municipalities, and attracts new investment opportunities. While I understand the need for fiscal responsibility, weakening economic development at the very moment when businesses are being asked to bear a heavier tax burden is short-sighted and counterproductive.

Additionally, as downtown Victoria businesses look for new areas to expand or relocate, Esquimalt must be poised to welcome them. With rising costs and shifting economic dynamics in Victoria's core, Esquimalt has a prime opportunity to position itself as an attractive and business-friendly alternative. However, without a clear economic development strategy and strong regional partnerships, we risk missing this opportunity and falling behind other municipalities that are actively investing in business attraction and retention.


I urge Council to reconsider these cuts and explore alternative ways to maintain Esquimalt's commitment to economic development. Ensuring we remain part of regional economic collaborations and maintaining structured support for local businesses is not an expense—it is an investment in Esquimalt's future prosperity.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Kristina Egyed  
Amplifying Local Businesses

Business Consultant and Advocate | [InkFish Collective Ltd](#)

  
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## Victoria McKean

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**From:** Mark Eraut [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** March-02-25 11:30 PM  
**To:** Council  
**Subject:** Budget Reduction Scenarios  
  
**Categories:** Agenda Item, Inputted in to Mail Log

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Township of Esquimalt Network. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Mayor and Council,

The Executive and Board Members of the Esquimalt Chamber of Commerce held its 2025 Strategic Planning and Priorities meeting this past Saturday.

This event was a very valuable exercise for the Chamber. The main initiative to come out of this event was that the Esquimalt Chamber of Commerce will be very active in its Advocacy Role for the local business community.

The Township of Esquimalt strives to be a Complete Community. A Complete Community is one that offers a variety of housing, services, and employment opportunities. It's designed to meet the needs of people at all stages of life. Central to the concept of Complete Community is the Vibrancy and Health of the business community so that it can serve the needs of the local population and create employment opportunities within that local population.

The Council recognizes the importance of our local business community in its Mission Statement. The Mission Statement mentions economic support first before all other priorities; **“The Township of Esquimalt works to support economic, cultural, social and environmental health for our current and future generations”**.

Protecting, nurturing, promoting and understanding the challenges of local business provides significant benefits to the community that relate to virtually all other Strategic Priorities of Council. The business community, through the transfer of commercial property tax costs to local business operators, pays significantly more in property taxes and receives far fewer services than residents. With whichever budget scenario is chosen they will pay 3 to 4 times what the average resident will pay. Residents look to businesses to provide them with services and employment that makes living in Esquimalt desirable.

It is to this end that the Esquimalt Chamber of Commerce is very concerned with the Budget Reductions to Economic Development proposed in all Four Budget Reduction Scenarios. Businesses pay 3-4 times the tax of residents and yet the only programs that benefit businesses is proposed to be cut from the 2025 budget. Programs initiated by the Township through the work of the Manager of Economic Development have only recently begun. These are important initiatives that can easily be funded from reductions in other areas that have not had any, or minimal, budget reductions (suggested funding sources identified below) where these programs do not impact the major tax payer, the local businesses of Esquimalt.

We ask that you **not** support defunding the Economic Development initiatives contained in the 2025 Budget save for perhaps a reduction to the budget for Economic Reconciliation to \$7,500 in 2025, rising to \$10,000 for years 2026 to 2028.

The membership in the South Island Prosperity Partnership is also an important tool for assisting in growing and diversifying Esquimalt's business options. The group assists in opening doors to opportunities, promotes collaboration on economic initiatives, and allows the Township's Manager of Economic Development to represent Esquimalt on the South Island Economic Development stage and learn new tools to assist in the development of business opportunities for Esquimalt. It is a large ticket item but in the uncertain economic times we are facing the Chamber believes participation is important. We ask council not to defund this membership completely. If Council believes that this budget item must be reduced, the Chamber asks Council to provide a level of funding that still allows Esquimalt to participate with the group.

Suggestions for reductions in other budget areas to provide funding for Economic Development Initiatives:

- South Island Powwow: Reduce to Silver (\$5,000 sponsorship a \$10,000 reduction) to align with sponsorship of similar sized community Colwood. Sidney, another similar sized community, is a Bronze Sponsor at \$2,500.
- Reduce ATP Refresh in Scenario 2, 3 and 4 to Nil
- Defer \$30,000 from Capital Requests for Engineering Workstations to 2027 or beyond.
- Reduce the license term or eliminate Nutanix License. Does Esquimalt currently have a license with Nutanix? If not, is this a required expense for a small municipality? If this is a renewal, how many years is the proposed renewal? Nutanix license terms range from 1 year to 5 years. If this is a multiyear renewal, then reducing the renewal term will result in less current cost.
- Defer TAB Fusion Upgrade to 2026 or 2027. \$27,000 savings. Does the program currently work as intended and is the upgrade necessary or just keeping up with the Jones's?

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the Esquimalt Chamber of Commerce perspective on the 2025 Budget deliberations. We look forward to presenting our views at tomorrow's Council meeting.

Regards,

Mark Eraut  
President (Acting)  
Esquimalt Chamber of Commerce